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Margot Baker, didn't get what she de-  
served—an opportunity to learn her  
trade by practicing it with some as-  
surance that the play would last. The  
fine, imaginative sets by D. Philips Spen-  
cer were also doomed to discard.

In the meantime I hope that Stage  
For Action can find a place for  
Granick's play in its plans. This is a big  
city and a wide country and there are  
enough audiences eager for more than  
the usual Broadway product which  
adheres to nothing but the purity of the  
box office. The commercial theater is  
asleep, after a brief period of war awak-  
ening. For its own good—and ours—  
it should be reminded that Reveille Is  
Always.

T. C. Foxx.

**H**IGHLIGHT of an otherwise routine  
variety benefit was the premiere  
performance by Stage for Action of  
Arnold Perl's short play on Negro  
discrimination, *Dream Job*. Originally  
intended as a radio script for a US Army  
program, it was banned for obvious  
reasons.

Adapted to the requirements of  
mobile theater which Stage for Action  
has developed to a high level, *Dream  
Job* tells the story of Ted, a young Ne-  
gro soldier returned from the war after  
receiving the Bronze Star Medal for  
heroism.

Coming home with Sam, a white bud-  
dy, Ted is confronted with the same  
race prejudice he risked his life to  
destroy. First it is the bartender in a  
bar who breaks the glass from which  
Ted drinks. Then the job he was ex-  
pecting as a mechanic is denied him be-  
cause of his color. Disillusioned, he be-  
comes bitter and sees the problem as  
black against white. But his sister fights  
against this incorrect analysis. She re-  
minds him of Sam and tries to convince  
Ted that the majority of whites are  
like him. Ted visits Sam and through  
his efforts secures a job in the same  
factory.

Arnold Perl is a facile and skillful  
writer and his characters live although  
he lacks the time to develop them.  
However, despite his positive approach  
to the question, which stresses the im-  
portance of seeing the problem as one  
which must be faced and solved by  
Negro and white together, his ending  
is a little too pat. In terms of action, the  
need to fight against discrimination is  
not emphasized; it is limited to a final  
speech by Sam. The play ends happily  
for Ted, but what about the thousands  
who have no Sam to get them a job?

Staged by Peter Frye, the mobile

technique was handicapped by the large  
Carnegie Hall stage. The acting, par-  
ticularly the leads played by Gordon  
Heath and Lloyd Gough, was excellent  
and lifted the play to its occasional  
heights. Among the fine supporting cast  
were Jane White, Lou Polan, Louis  
Gilbert and Ken Renard. Musical  
background, setting the mood, was  
provided by Brownie McGhee and  
Charles Polacheck.

GILBERT LAWRENCE.

## "The Airborne"

**L**ISTENING to Marc Blitzstein's *The  
Airborne* was a most exciting ex-  
perience for those who heard it last  
week at the City Music Center. Audi-  
ence reaction was spontaneous and  
enthusiastic to a degree seldom accorded  
a new work.

Blitzstein himself has given us a clue  
to this feeling when he said that "seri-  
ous work (in music) and popular work  
have finally found a healthy meeting  
ground." A fusion of the popular with  
the serious in music is just what many  
composers have been striving for, par-  
ticularly since the advent of radio  
though without the striking success of  
*The Airborne*. Witness the numerous  
instances of the incorporation of folk  
material in orchestral music both here  
and in the Soviet Union.

Blitzstein in *The Airborne* has taken  
a less obvious way, a way that holds  
great possibilities for the future, but  
which is fraught with dangers in the  
hands of a composer of less stylistic sen-  
sitivity. Abjuring folk material, he has  
written in a way that at times reflects  
the current popular taste without,  
however, hitting rock bottom. He has  
found a common denominator between  
the "highbrow" and "lowbrow" (about  
as elusive as the philosopher's stone)  
and with unerring good taste has  
avoided any impression of incongruity.

The text, being an organic whole,  
has supplied the continuity not always  
obvious in the music. It is the product  
of an enlightened political thinker, en-  
dowed with an unusual musical talent  
and possessed of a boundless faith and  
an intense purposiveness in communicat-  
ing his message, not to the select few  
but to the multitude.

Written in a style easily understood  
by the average GI Joe, even descending  
to the lowly pun, *The Airborne* deals  
with a subject most "in the air" today,  
and does it in a series of dramatic  
episodes in the history of flying. Com-  
posed in a diatonic idiom, with ample  
use of dissonance when needed, the

music is happy in invention, never trite nor derivative, and brilliantly scored.

The voice writing is effective, although here I should like to register a protest at a certain sin in prosody to which I still have to be reconciled in listening to contemporary music. I refer to the undue stress of length given to unimportant words or syllables, which

serves no melodic or rhythmic purpose, but merely distorts. It ain't natural!

To discourse on the various episodes that could be highlighted is beyond the scope of this review. For this the reader is referred to the numerous radio broadcasts which it is to be hoped the work will be accorded.

WALLINGFORD RIEGGER.

## SOME RECENT BOOKS

TALK ABOUT RUSSIA WITH MASHA SCOTT, by Pearl S. Buck. John Day. \$1.75.

IN THE midst of her conversations with Masha Scott, Miss Buck pauses to remark: "I had looked through a window into Russia. It was only one window, but what I saw was clear and true." It would be hard to describe more accurately the unique contribution of this excellent little book.

Aware that the Soviet Union is a mighty force in world affairs, Miss Buck wanted to visualize Soviet life in concrete human terms. She chose to see the socialist reconstruction of a great nation through the eyes of an actual participant.

Masha was four years old when the revolution came to her little peasant village. When she left the Soviet Union war had not yet come to her country. Scrupulously omitting what she did not herself experience, Masha tells what happened to the life about her during those two history-packed decades.

Masha's story is as exciting as it is colorful. In simple, vivid descriptions, she makes us see the pre-revolutionary life of ignorance, disease and backbreaking toil in her native village. Her parents, especially her father, Ivan Kalinovich, might have stepped out of one of Gorky's novels. These are real people, weighted down by centuries-old

poverty and exploitation, burdened by feudal prejudices. And just because they were human beings and not the lifeless puppets of lifeless history books, things did not go altogether smoothly when the revolution came. Besides the resistance of kulaks and other counter-revolutionists, it was necessary to overcome old habits of thought, old techniques, ancient, ingrained folkways.

Eventually, however, the new triumphed over the old. Modern education, modern medicine, the vast achievements of collective farming, created a new environment and new human beings—slowly and unevenly, to be sure—but irresistibly. "In the old days they had suffered over every little single strip of land, and between the strips were those banks of grass. But now as far as their eyes could see was waving wheat and all around the village it looked like a nobleman's land and the people were proud of this." And from this transformation grew the inevitable loyalty to the new socialist order which mendacious "journalism" cannot slander out of existence. "Father liked the Soviet government. He saw that it was the people's government and served the people." And again: "Mother took the October Revolution as the liberation of

### **CORLISS LAMONT'S** brilliant story of ethnic democracy in action

# The Peoples of the Soviet Union



This is the first complete story of how the Soviets encouraged cultural and regional autonomy, fostered the economy of backward peoples, and have given complete racial equality to every ethnic group in the Soviet system.

**SOVIET RUSSIA TODAY:** "The rich factual data, a product of painstaking research, is brightened throughout with many telling proverbs and inspired lines of native lore . . . Of particular interest is the unique Soviet attitude toward the Negro and the Gypsies, and the signal success gained in eradicating anti-Semitism."

**SAN FRANCISCO CHRONICLE:** "It makes Russian political structures intelligible in terms of their human units, and these human units are well worth knowing."

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